

getting better at becoming a ghost by thecopperkid

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Summary:

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“No,” he answers, indignant, but he doesn’t even convince himself.
“No, I just --”

“You know what they say about fear, right?” the voice asks. “That it’s almost indistinguishable from arousal. That your body can’t tell the difference.”

“They don’t say that,” Steve says, poking his head out the door and looking left to right. He’s just fucking exasperated. “Nobody says that.”

“I say that.”

*

Steve gets a *Scream*-style call while he's babysitting the kids on Halloween night, and right now would be a really good fucking time for Billy to get home from work. // Billy likes masks.

getting better at becoming a ghost

Author's Note:

"would you fight for my love?" - jack white

i can't tell you what song i was *actually* listening to while i wrote this bc then id have to ... kill you, probably :((it *definitely* wasn't by anyone with the initials J.T.) ((ok listen he has great sex songs and idc))

It's Halloween. And instead of being drunk as fuck, having a party at his own place, Steve's achingly sober at the Henderson house.

Well. Not sober, exactly, he's *baked*, but he could be shitfaced right now, too, if it wasn't for those kids.

Instead he's fucking. Chopping up *broccoli*, with this huge-ass knife? As if kids ever even eat vegetables on pizza. They're gonna pull them off anyway. But he's trying to make this edible for himself, too, because he gave up eating meat, and pepperoni is like, the grossest meat of all, so half of this is gonna be veggies.

The worst part of it is, Billy's at work at the restaurant, and he gets fucking reamed out if he's caught using his phone, so he can't even keep Steve company. Can't even spend any time with Steve on his favorite fucking holiday 'til it's later.

Steve got the most recent text at 7, and now it's just been dead air while he waits for Billy to be released.

hey babe we just got our rush, should b outta here by 12 ish

Nice. Yeah. They'll both be exhausted by then, will probably only have time to rip Billy's bowl in the Camaro before they inevitably give themselves up to sleep, pass out on Dustin's floor, or something.

Because Steve agreed to babysit tonight -- but really the kids are too

old for fucking babysitters.

They all know he's mostly just there to make sure Lucas doesn't get handsy on Max and make shit weird for everyone.

They're fucking fourteen, maybe? It's gross.

So he's keeping an eye out for weirdness. Dicing some fucking red pepper. Watching from the kitchen island as the kids sort out Twix and Starbursts.

It's a bartering system. El hates almonds so she gives Max her huge Hershey's with Almonds from that big scary house at the end of the road that gives full size bars. In exchange, she receives like, six mini packs of Skittles and those Reese's Cups with the Reese's Pieces in it.

Steve *also* thinks they're too old to be still Trick-or-Treating. He stopped that shit and started going to parties at this age, was probably doing the whole "told-your-parents-you're-at-a-sleepover-when-you're-really-passed-out-from-alcohol-poisoning-in-a-field-somewhere" thing.

But the kids are watching *Evil Dead*, and honestly?

Steve doesn't know how they do it. He's more of a *Halloweentown* kind of guy.

The movie they've got on, it's the remake, and it's fucking scary, objectively speaking, of course.

It's kind of gory trash, but it's also *terrifying*.

That face in the trailers? Gave Steve fucking nightmares the first time he saw it in theaters with some chick. He felt fucking terror strike his heart, spreading out like lightning, when it popped up on screen.

So when he's watching from the safety of the counter, absently gnawing on a strip of raw red pepper, he almost has a fucking panic attack as his phone begins buzzing on the counter.

Unknown.

Which is definitely whatever.

This is actually the second call he's gotten in a row from an unknown number. He's not going to answer, because he gets a zillion calls a day that are like "Nebraska Call", and Steve doesn't even *know* anyone from Nebraska. They usually leave messages in robot voices asking about his retirement or some shit, so he's ignoring it.

The caller hangs up eventually, and Steve's sliding the pizza pan onto the rack in the preheated oven. Setting the timer, and it beeps back too loud as he punches in twenty-five minutes.

He's all pissy. Because he'd been hoping it'd be at least someone *good* calling him. Like, maybe Billy got off work early, by some chance. And picked him up those tacos he likes with the potato filling, and one of those flavored Red Bull things that the coffee shop makes. (Billy likes blue raspberry. Steve likes pineapple and coconut. The kids have their favorite flavors, too, it's a *thing*.)

But no such fucking luck, so now he's eating candy out of the big orange pumpkin that Mrs. Henderson left for the Trick-or-Treaters. She's at some fucking Halloween party for her knitting circle? Which is really just an excuse to drink too much wine. But Steve's not really judging. He'd be doing the same if he wasn't tied down. The kids kinda *begged* him. So they could get some alone time from *real* supervision.

He's probably gonna be sick later, because he's been eating all the shitty candy that was leftover, that kind old people buy because they still think it's good. Fucking Whoppers. The saddest excuse for chocolate Steve's ever experienced. But he's just popping them anyway, just to have *something* to do. He's eaten so fucking many of them, he's lost count. The trash is full of fucking mini Whopper boxes.

He's got like, seven of them in his mouth, puffing up his cheeks, stuck all crumbly in his molars when his phone starts buzzing again, clattering against the cutting board and rattling the knife atop it, too.

Fucking Unknown.

It's the third call. He answers, this time, on the fourth buzz.

"Hello?" he says, voice low, so as not to interrupt the girl shrieking as she like, saws off her own fucking leg on screen.

"Hi."

The voice on the other end is a man's, all distorted. It doesn't sound like a telemarketer. It's kinda eerie.

Steve would be scared in theory, but his mind instantly jumps to Tommy. Tommy, who's at Tina's party tonight. He's probably sitting with some douchebags from school, trying to scare Steve.

Steve cocks his hips, leaning against the counter. "Yeah? Can I help you?"

"Who's this?" All coy.

"I dunno, you called *me*," Steve sighs. "Fuck off, Tommy. I'm too high for this shit, okay? Have fun at the fucking party."

He's getting ready to hit that little red button, end the call, but the guy's like, "Tommy? This isn't Tommy."

That's supposed to freak him out, right?

Or maybe it's. Actually *not* Tommy, which is something he hadn't considered.

Yeah, he's definitely hanging up. He's smarter than this.

"Look, man," he's spitting into the receiver. "You must have the wrong number, or something. Sorry."

(The fuck is he sorry for? This creep can seriously fuck off.)

Look, Steve isn't *dependent* on Billy, or anything, but he could really fucking use him around right now. There's something about having him there that makes Steve feel. *Safe*.

He stuffs his phone into the pocket of his pants. Watches the blackish

blood leaking out of some girl in the movie. He's got a fucking chill up his spine, but maybe it's just sensory overload. The combination of bad vibes.

Steve almost swallows an entire box of Whoppers. He dumps them into his mouth, chews them anxiously.

And his phone's fucking buzzing, again. Unknown, *again*.

Steve may hate scary movies, but he's seen enough of them to know that this is the exact fucking way the jock in the letterman jacket is killed.

And Steve *has* a letterman jacket, with the Hawkins emblem on the front. It's draped over one of the chairs at the kitchen counter right fucking now, like some harbinger for his untimely teenage death.

The worst part about it is, Steve hits *three* of the major categories for victims in horror movies. He's mentally counting them on his fingers.

Jock.

Stoner.

Babysitter.

Fuck. Like, he's *so* dead, he's fucking *bait* if some moralistic slasher breezes through Hawkins, right? Some dude in a mask is gonna give Steve what's coming to him. For sinning, and stuff. For doing drugs. For blatantly blowing Billy in the Wheeler's dining room that time he came to pick Dustin up from like, playing Mario Kart, or fucking Fortnite, or whatever the fuck the kids play.

Or is Steve just really that paranoid? He can't keep the suspicion out of his voice when he responds to the caller.

"What?"

"You hung up on me. I never got a chance to ask you my question."

"Leave me alone. Stop fucking calling me."

“Not until you answer me. Do you like horror movies?”

Steve fucking huffs. Eyes the kids, because he’s kind of piqued Lucas’ distrustful interest. Lucas’ head’s poked up from the couch, hair fucked and matted from wearing his Spider Man mask all night.

“I’m in the middle of one,” he says, fucking eyerolling. Crunching Whoppers into the phone, that way his mom’s told him he shouldn’t. Steve doesn’t know why he invests time into this shit. Plays right into this game. Doesn’t hang the fuck up. “A really *shitty* one.”

“Sounds like something someone who’s scared would say.”

“Okay, yeah, who the *fuck* is this?” Steve snaps. “I’m not -- I’m not *scared*.”

“So prove it. Tell me your favorite scary movie.”

“Fucking none of them,” Steve says. “Fucking. Like. *Zombieland*.”

“That doesn’t count,” the voice says. “Listen, I’ll go first. Know which one I like? *When A Stranger Calls*. You know. Where the killer preys on babysitters?”

Steve’s mouth suddenly feels so dry.

Okay.

Like.

That’s just a common horror trope, to ask what scary movie you like, right? And it’s definitely not a personal attack on Steve?

He’s looking at the dull red glow on the stove’s clock. Wondering when the *fuck* Billy’s gonna be let out of work.

It’s only 10:30.

“Hey, man, Happy fucking Halloween, or whatever, I gotta fucking go--”

“You know what happens to bad babysitters, right?”

“What are you *talking* about?”

“I’m just saying. How are the parents going to feel when they hear you’re stoned? That you let their kids watch scary movies?”

Steve’s scoffing, but lowkey? Panicking. “I -- I’m *not*, I -- “

“You’ve seen *Friday the 13th*, right? Buncha teenagers get fucked up and let that kid drown,” he’s saying. “So they get what they deserve.”

It’s quiet for a second on Steve’s end, before the guy goes on, like, “Oh, by the way, how’s *Evil Dead*?”

Steve freezes. Stops chewing. Swallows around a mouthful.

Fucking terror hits him, just the way it did when he first saw that chick’s face in the film. It jolts through him, electric.

He... can’t remember mentioning *Evil Dead*. But he *must* have, right?

He’s trying to remember if he Snapped this. Or Tweeted about it. Texted anybody about it.

And like. “*Babysitter*.”

He scans the room, anticipating one of the kids is fucking with him, using some fucking app. Kids have four thousand apps.

But they’re all tuned in to the film. Making a goddamn mess, littering the carpet with wrappers. El and Max sprawled on the couch, Will in the armchair, the rest of the boys on the floor. None of them even have their phones out, surprisingly. ‘Cause they’re like, wrist-deep in chocolate.

So Steve struts to the fucking shades behind Will. Peeks out the window. It’s hard to see past the eclipse of the streetlight. Too dark past that to see into the road. The orange trees are billowing in the breeze.

He snaps the blinds shut over the window, so the street’s no longer visible.

The kids are kind of looking at him funny, but whatever. He's paranoid as fuck and for once in his life it doesn't have much to do with the weed he's smoked.

"How the *fuck* did you know that? How the fuck did you--?"

The voice is laughing, which is just fucking *great*.

He's heading down the hall, about to check the lock on the door, when he hears this noise.

At the window on the front door.

Squeaking.

This jagged sound, uneven and scraping. It stops, starts again. Repetitive. Over and over, a little different each time.

Steve knows this is a huge fucking rookie mistake, but there he goes. Edging toward it. Gliding in sockfeet over the cold tile, toward the door.

He's got that stupid bat out in the trunk of his car. He could feasibly make a run for it, if need be.

"Tommy, cut the fucking shit. It's seriously not funny. I'll kick your *fuckin*g ass. See who's laughing then."

"I told you. It's not Tommy."

At least Steve *tried* to convince himself it was him.

"My boyfriend's gonna be here any minute," he hears himself say. "Like. Really soon."

And God, he really, really didn't want to go there, didn't want to *have* to go there, but -- desperate measures.

Billy doesn't even *know* that Steve calls him that. He's never said it to his face, *never*. It's kinda like Steve's private thing, in his head, that he's never told another living *soul*.

The threat sounds so fucking pathetic once it's actually out of his mouth, nothing intimidating, threatening, like the most primitive part of his brain had hoped it would be. That instinctual drive to defend himself.

"Oh, your *boyfriend*, huh?" the guy's mocking him. "I'm fucking shaking. Hey, tell me something real quick."

"Yeah? *What?*"

"What's that, outside? At the window. Do you hear that?"

As Steve gets closer, he sees a fucking knife in the window pane. Making that screech against the glass. Probably scratching it the fuck up.

Is that real?

There's no way that's real. It has to be like. Plastic. Right?

Steve's fucking. *Terrified.*

God, he's so fucking baked, he's so fucking baked, he wishes he weren't so fucking baked, there's no way to sober up from being that baked, *why the fuck is he always so fucking baked?*

Who lets him *do* this?

(*Billy* lets him do this. Because Billy gave him that *pen*. Now he can get fucking stoned in front of the kids. It's scentless, basically. None of them the wiser. It's like. A bad habit, because now he's just *constantly* fucked.)

He reaches the end of the hall, and the sound has stopped. It's dark out that way, because Steve had turned the light off, so Trick-or-Treaters would stop fucking bothering him.

Maybe the guy can tell how close Steve is to his hiding spot, because the knife vanishes.

Steve gets to the door and peers out.

Everything's so still there, it's a little unsettling. Just the fallen orange leaves swirling on the ground.

Okay, is he going fucking nuts?

Or is that *actually* the Ghostface mask? Staring, statue-still, from the middle of the driveway, backlit by the streetlight behind Steve's car. Long, contorted jaw hanging, permanently agape. Phone pressed to the side of his head, still listening to Steve's fucking nervous breathing.

He practically does that thing characters do in cartoons, where they sort of shake their head to clear their vision, like that's going to somehow make *Ghostface* disappear. Or maybe it'll shake the high off of him.

Dude's still there, though.

Yeah, weed doesn't make you hallucinate, but right now Steve's kinda *wishing* that all this was just some bad trip.

There's a scream in the other room, followed by giggling, like maybe one of the boys made the girls jump, and it makes Steve whip his head in that direction.

Which was a bad plan because now the ghost's gone when Steve turns back, the door to the garage is snapping shut, and Steve audibly fucking *gasps*.

"What? You're not *scared*, are you?"

"No," he answers, indignant, but he doesn't even convince himself.
"No, I just --"

"You know what they say about fear, right?" the voice asks. "That it's almost indistinguishable from arousal. That your body can't tell the difference."

"They don't say that," Steve says, poking his head out the door and looking left to right. He's just fucking exasperated. "Nobody says that."

“I say that.”

Alright, super gross, because *that’s* what this guy wanted? Something to fucking get off to? But also, that bitchy tone is a little too familiar.

So based on a fucking hunch and not much else, he’s tucking his phone into his back pocket and *following*. Opens the front door, crosses the stone path to the garage and shoulders his way into the slightly weathered, swollen door, into the pitch black of the empty garage. His eyes can’t adjust to it.

It’s maybe the second bravest thing he’s ever done?

Some instinctual, moth-to-the-flame kind of shit. Which is what it’s *always* kind of been with Billy, their whole fucking relationship, it’s like, he fucking knows better, but his feet, his dick, his fucking heart, *nothing* seems to agree with his brain that Billy and everything connecting to Billy is *bad*, they keep leading him back to him like something’s gonna change, when he knows nothing will.

There, in the darkness, he’s scrambling for the light switch, unfamiliar with the layout of the place, when, “Boo,” this motherfucker hisses in Steve’s ear.

And suddenly, Steve doesn’t know what the fuck is hitting him, because the door snaps shut behind him, and he’s grabbed around the waist by strong arms, and the guy’s got that fucking *knife* brandished -- so Steve’s just fucking *screaming*.

Like, *actually* yelling.

“Jesus fucking Christ, relax, okay, it’s *fake*,” Billy’s saying, dropping his weapon and smoothing over Steve’s arms, holding him to his chest. There’s a clattering on the ground as he’s disarmed, knife falling to their feet. “Baby, baby. *Baby*. Hey. Oh my God. You’re fucking fine, yeah?”

Steve swears, he could fucking punch Billy right now, if he wasn’t being restrained and pushed up against the wall, bumping into some shelves. Knocking stray baseball bats and helmets from their nooks. A slightly deflated basketball bounces at their feet; Steve can’t see it,

but can trace the familiar hollow pitch as it ricochets on the concrete.

Steve's heart is still rabbiting in his chest, it feels like he's gonna pass out. Like, it was *already* kind of beating fast from smoking weed.

"Fuck off. Fuck *off*. Asshole."

"I'm not gonna hurt you, I'd *never* hurt you," Billy says, then drops his voice low, growly, like, "I mean. Unless you ask nice, first. In which case. How could I tell my baby '*no?*'"

"You fucking," Steve spits, "*Scared* me. You *know* how nervous I get. How *paranoid*."

Billy pulls up the mask so it rests on top of his head, soft black fabric of the hood pooling around him like a misshapen wig, and Steve can barely make out his smile in the dark. He kisses Steve aggressively, so Ghostface's chin pokes Steve's forehead. Billy smells like the restaurant. Familiar, like buffalo chicken and barbecue sauce, and he tastes like Blue Moon, 'cause Billy's underage but they still give him a shift drink.

He pulls off, delighted, like, "I got you so good. I can't believe I got you."

Steve's tilting his head away, letting Billy trail his lips over Steve's neck. Pissed as he is, he couldn't resist Billy's mouth if he tried.

"I fucking hate you, I almost had a fucking heart attack. I'm having -- *palpitations*."

"Come on, that wasn't scary, it wasn't even that *good*, I came up with that plan, like, forty minutes ago," he's saying, leaning his weight into Steve, pinning him against a wooden shelf that pokes uncomfortably, splintery, into the thin fabric of his shirt. "I honestly thought you knew it was me. Seriously. I'm sorry."

Steve's efforts in batting him away are futile -- Billy's stronger. Billy's not baked as fuck. Billy's not *trembling*.

"Didn't know you were a screamer," Billy says. The lust is thick, heavy in his voice, dripping off his tongue, like venom. "*Please* tell

me you sound that fuckin' good in bed."

That gives Steve a start all over again.

The thing here is, they haven't, like. *Had* this conversation yet, in so many words.

It's kind of a brave move on Billy's part, because they've been kind of doing this thing, where they just skirt around it.

Make out in the front seat, jerk each other off in the shower, blow each other in the back row at the movies, *yeah*, but they won't use the word *boyfriend* to each other, and they haven't had *sex* -- because any dabbling in the two, any mixture, would be this big *thing*.

So, instead, straying from the subject, a little shy: "Are you -- you're not getting fucking horny from scaring me, are you?" Steve bitches. But, obviously, Billy is. "You're fucking sick, you know that?"

"Can you blame me?" Billy taunts, hands all over Steve. "You shoulda seen your face. You get these big, sad eyes."

"Hey, hey, *stop*, I gotta," Steve says, breathless. "Take out the pizza? It's gonna burn."

He visualizes the Henderson house up in flames. Like. *Fuck*.

"The brats can get it," Billy tells him, squeezing over Steve's cock. "They know how to use a fucking pot holder. I mean, what I'm most surprised about? Is that *you* even know how to cook something. Usually I gotta do it for you."

"I'm *autonomous*," he says. "I don't need you."

Billy's sucking on his neck, tonguing up his pulse, like, "I don't know about that. Sounded like you needed me before. All, '*My boyfriend's gonna be here any minute.*'"

Steve's glad it's dark, because he can feel himself blushing. His cheeks are so hot, Billy can probably feel it, radiating off him.

"Shut the fuck up," he says. "I just got done cutting veggies, you're

lucky I didn't bring the fucking knife with me."

Steve feels the warmth, the firmness of his cock, pressing into Steve's hips, his thigh, as Billy rocks against him. "Good thing I brought mine, then."

Steve's kinda ignoring that, in a haze. Practically sighing at the way Billy's rubbing into him. "Huh," he murmurs, dumb, distracted.

"Good thing I brought *mine*," Billy repeats. He pulls away and Steve's, like. Whining about it.

He *just fucking* got into it.

When Billy pops back up, he's holding it. His little prop, retrieved from the floor. So cute, right.

But then he sort of.

Tugs Steve's shirt up. Grunts, "Take this off," and Steve complies.

Billy scrapes the flat end of the knife against the smooth plane of Steve's stomach, and it's icy cool. And like, suddenly it hits him, that plastic isn't a great conductor -- plastic doesn't *get* that cold.

Steve sucks in a little gasp at the temperature, at all that it entails, and Billy's laughing.

"Surprise," he drawls.

And if Steve wasn't fucking hard already, he's painfully hard now, knowing that his not-boyfriend is a fucking *psychopath*.

Steve groans, and it comes out choked off, desperate.

"Oh," Billy's purring at him, dragging it along Steve's pale skin. It tickles, spawns goosebumps. "You like that, or something?"

"Yes," breathes Steve. He knows his eyes are blown wide in the dark. The way Billy likes. "Please."

"What about here?" Billy asks, dragging it up, up, higher, so the

sharp tip ghosts from Steve's belly button, to his abs. Steve's breathing hitches when Billy stops in the center of his chest.

Then, Billy holds the flat side of the knife to Steve's throat, so just the very edge skims against the underside of Steve's chin. Pressing it there like a promise.

"And... how about *here*?"

He says it slow, so fucking slow, and steady, how the fuck does he *do* that?

Yeah. *Yeah*, Steve. Fucking. Likes it there, obviously, is that even a question?

It's not, it's not a fucking *question*, or at least it's not a very good question.

Steve's a mess, a goddamn wreck, like, "Baby. *Baby*. But -- the pizza. It's gonna. Burn."

"Would you forget about the *fucking* pizza?"

"Okay, okay, fine."

They're rutting into each other, a little out of sync, but it's fucking perfect, the best shit in the fucking world. Steve's eyes have started to adjust, and he can make out Billy's icy blue eyes staring back into his, long lashes framing them, pupils growing wide.

He's still got that fucking knife to Steve's neck, cold and fucking scary, pressed just hard enough to make Steve nervous as Billy humps his cock into Steve's, grinds their lengths together, Steve's joggers against Billy's workout shorts that are too fucking cold to be wearing outside in October.

"Member what I said," Billy's panting, fucking grinning, biting over his lip looking *thrilled* as he fucks against Steve. "About fear?"

Steve's moaning. He's got his neck against the shelves uncomfortably, just taking it as Billy pins him there. "Uh-huh," Steve's babbling. "You were fucking. *Right*, I fucking. I fucking like it. Like being

scared.”

“Yeah?” He’s asking. “You were hard this whole fucking time, weren’t you.”

Steve’s squeezing his eyes shut. Can’t hold that eye contact, or he’s gonna come way too fast. Billy’s so intense. Staring him down with his eyebrows knit together. And Billy’s got issues with attention, he’s got pretty bad ADHD, he can’t sit still if he tried, can’t study with Steve for ten minutes ‘cause he starts fucking talking and scrolling Insta and rocking back in his chair and fiddling his pen, clicking it on, off, on, off, like, *come on, Billy, baby, focus* -- but right now?

Right now Steve’s never seen him concentrate harder on anything in his fucking *life*.

When Steve’s too blissed out to answer him, Billy’s grabbing Steve’s hips tight with his other hand, digging fingertips in hard enough to bruise, saying, “*Weren’t* you. Admit it.”

“Yeah.”

“And you didn’t even know who I was. That’s so fucking. *You’re* so goddamn. *Bad*.”

Steve’s waiting for some slutty babysitter joke, but thank fucking God, it never comes. Instead Billy’s just panting loud, watching him carefully.

“Come for me, baby,” he’s saying. “Fuck yeah. Come.”

And who the fuck is Steve to deny him of that.

Plus, from Billy, that’s not a suggestion, that’s like, a command.

He’s actually, *literally* got a knife to his throat, so. There’s not a lot of choice involved.

“I’m coming,” Steve blurts. “I’m. I’m coming.”

There’s something *super fucking satisfying* about saying those words aloud.

The thickness of Billy's cock brushes him just fucking right and Steve's spilling out into his pants, warm and wet and messy, seeping straight through the fabric. It feels so fucking good, he doesn't want it to stop, it's almost too good, because Billy's still grinding into him and now Steve's oversensitive, gritting his teeth through it as Billy thrusts his hips three more times, and his chest expands with a tight breath as he tips over the edge. Shudders into his own orgasm. That strangled sound he makes when he says Steve's name, on the climax of it, like, fuck, if that's not the best thing Steve's ever heard.

Billy releases him from his clutches. Sets the knife down fucking *somewhere*.

They're so fucking sweaty.

Even in the cold-ass garage, Steve's soaked with it. Can smell the saltiness on Billy's skin, too.

They've got their hands all over each other, Steve's hands up under Billy's black long sleeve, soothing over sweaty-smooth muscles, up the planes of each others backs. They kiss, for just a second, mostly tongue.

And Billy pulls off, wet-sounding, like, "We should like, watch out, 'cause *my boyfriend's gonna be here any minute*."

And Steve is *actually* thinking about punching him, this time, maybe, punching that stupid smirk off his face.